Dr. Sherry Overholt
General & Artistic Director & Voice Teacher

Jennifer Grimaldi Toohey
Artistic Coordinator & Voice Teacher

Focus on the Process QSVI

2026

Welcome to the 19th season of Queens Summer Vocal Institute!

The QSVI experience provides each young artist with a strong foundation of essential tools to excel in the competitive world of opera and vocal performance. Led by acclaimed regional and international professionals, this intensive summer program is sure to train, motivate and inspire each young singer!

Queens Summer Vocal Institute Faculty & Staff

Dr. Sherry Overholt
General Director & Voice Teacher

Jennifer Grimaldi Toohey
Artistic Director/Voice Teacher

Alex Paul Sheerin
Director of Opera division, Stage director for *Into the Woods* & *La Clemenza di Tito*

Ron Land
Collaborative Pianist/Coach

Elaine Smith Purcell
Co-Director of High School Division/Coach

Naseer Ashraf
Pianist & Music Director

Zachary Anderson
Pianist & Music Director

Zachary Ashland
Oboe

Sam Atlas
Trumpet

Jana Ballard
Conductor for *Into the Woods*

Jennifer Barasamian
Voice Teacher

Dorian Block
Marketing Consultant

Louis G. Burkot
Conductor of La Clemenza di Tito/ Voice Teacher

Grace Cazzaniga
Assistant Stage Director

Julia Ching
Administrative Assistant

Chloe Dickens
Orchestra Manager/Violin

Lindsay Donat
Double Bass

Chris Foss
Bassoon

Cris Frisco
Collaborative Pianist, Coach

Teddy Froelich
Viola

Amy Guarino
Videographer/Clinician

Tammy Hensrud
Voice Teacher

Kelly Horsted
Pianist/Music Director of Cendrillion

Elaine Huang
Assistant Stage Director

Lynda Irizarry
Administrative Assistant

Sara Juneau
Cello

Robert Kahn
Conductor/Masterclass Clinician

Nicholas Kaponyas
Collaborative Pianist/ Assistant Music Director for *Cendrillion*

YounJu Kim
Collaborative Pianist

Dan Klein
Voice Teacher

Jeffrey Langer
Program Coordinator

Diane Machin
Stage Director

Julie Lemberger
Photographer

Juliyan Martinez
Clarinet

David Moon
French Horn

Dr. Sean Moonsammy
Speech & Language Pathologist

Mary Nessinger
Voice Teacher

Dylan Ofrias
Percussionist

Mary Pinto
Coach

Matthew Pulick
Collaborative Pianist Intern

Sam Rachmuth
Administrative Assistant

Peter Randsman
Artist Manager

Charles Reed
Cello

Beth Roberts
Voice Teacher

Abhay Saha
Pianist/Assistant Music Director of *Into the Woods*

Sherjeru Sarmiento
Violin

Mark Schnaible
Voice Teacher

Vica Schwartman
Collaborative Pianist

Tracey Spero
Headshot Photographer

Mina Sukovic
Flute

Korliss Uecker
Voice Teacher

Abril Valbuena
Assistant Stage Director/Schedule Coordinator

Justin Werner
Artist Manager

Mica Woodburn
Production Assistant

Violetta Zabbi
Pianist & Music Director

Queens Summer Vocal Institute would like to extend a special thank you to...

Staff at Aaron Copland School of Music

Staff at Queens College

Staff at Summit Housing

Elizabeth Hendrey
Interim President of Queens College

Dr. Emily Wilbourne
Director and Chair of Aaron Copland School of Music

Thomas Lee
Director of Administration

Katrina Fasulo
Festival Consultant

QSVI.ORG

Queens Summer Vocal Institute 2026 Roster

High School Division

Oliver Anderson
Tenor
Inwood, NY

Brennan Antoinette
Soprano
Birmingham, AL

Angelo Bass-Varsalona
Baritone
Coral Springs, FL

Bohdan Budash
Baritone
Chernivtsi, Ukraine /
Smithtown, NY

Richard Cifuentes Lents
Bass
Queens, NY

Sayumi Cortez Damian
Mezzo-Soprano
Brookyln, NY

Rêve Cortizo-Burgess
Mezzo-Soprano
New York City, NY

Mia Cruz
Soprano
East Northport, NY

Zadia Danon
Mezzo-Soprano
Brooklyn, NY

Julia Dickey
Soprano
Great Neck, NY

Kai Don
Soprano
Brooklyn, NY

Lucy Dooling
Soprano
Ballston Spa, NY

Zachary Dorf
Tenor
Long Island, NY

Lili Malika Fenchel
Mezzo-Soprano
Los Angeles, CA

Rai Goyal
Baritone
New York City, NY

Emily Harmanos
Mezzo-Soprano
Pittsburgh, PA

Kendall Hollmon
Soprano
Flushing, NY

John Jhirad
Baritone
New York City, NY

Kaya Jimenez
Soprano
New York City, NY

Mercedes Laub
Soprano
Brooklyn, NY

Tien Mawhinney
Baritone
New York City, NY

Lorena Monell
Mezzo-Soprano
Jackson Heights, NY

Victoria Plasota
Mezzo-Soprano
New York City, NY

Jazlyn Richey
Soprano
New York City, NY

Minyul Ryu
Soprano
Brooklyn, NY

Finn Sethi
Tenor
Manhattan, NY

Leonora Steward
Soprano
San Francisco, CA

Katelyn Vivona
Soprano
Rockville Centre, NY

Marissa Vollweiler
Mezzo-Soprano
Plainview, NY

Demi Wang
Soprano
Los Angeles, CA

Ellen Williamson
Soprano
Philadelphia, PA

Nicole Zhang
Soprano
Great Neck, NY

Jolene Zjou
Soprano
Irvine, CA

Opera Division

Adam Arntson
Tenor
Dallas, TX

Daniela Baker
Soprano
Nashville, TN

Marina Beeson
Soprano
Dunkirk, MD

Isabel Breakey
Soprano
Miami, FL

Gabrielle Brockett
Soprano
Brooklyn, NY

Elizabeth Campbell
Mezzo-Soprano
Asheville, NC

Grace Cazzaniga
Soprano
St. James, NY

Katherine Clifford
Soprano
Boston, MA

Telvin Culberson
Tenor
Dallas, TX

Ambrose Cusick
Soprano
Burlington, VT

Emmaline Dial
Soprano
West Virginia

Kate Dietz
Soprano
Montreal, Canada

Christina Draper
Mezzo-Soprano
Seattle, WA

Finn Duncan
Bass
Huntington, WV

Lily Ann Faamausili
Mezzo-Soprano
Honolulu, HI

Lucie Freeman
Mezzo-Soprano
Brooklyn, NY

Eliza Goldsteen
Mezzo-Soprano
New York City, NY

Marian Hernandez
Mezzo-Soprano
Brooklyn, NY

Sophie Hill
Soprano
Norfolk, Virginia

Lynda Irizarry
Soprano
Queens, NY

William Kim
Soprano
Flushing, NY

Patricia Kopko
Soprano
Boston, MA

Yong Hoon Lee
Tenor
South Korea

Lani Lee
Mezzo-Soprano
Cambridge, MA

Bethany Leung
Soprano
Guangzhou, China

Jinping Li
Soprano
Wuhan, China

Liliana Mann
Soprano
Manhattan, NY

Rebecca Marchan-Espino
Mezzo-Soprano
Astoria, NY

Amelia Mayo
Soprano
Maryville, TN

Henry McCue
Baritone
Needham, MA

Michelle Menezes
Mezzo-Soprano
Mclean, VA

Riley Musi
Soprano
Boston, MA

Narissa Nagee
Soprano
Humble, TX

Molly Nemirow
Mezzo-Soprano
Reading, PA

Ravi Nguyen
Tenor
Westford, MA

Mason Oberlin
Tenor
San Antonio, TX

Ed Peña
Baritone
Long Island, NY

Henry Podoll
Bass/Baritone
Tuckahoe, NY

Isabella Rivera
Soprano
Winter Haven, FL

Aylani Rodriguez
Soprano
Tampa, FL

Chantal Sadighpour
Mezzo-Soprano
Great Neck, NY

Casey Schopflocher
Countertenor
New York, NY

Yuiba Shin
Soprano
Louisiana

Rachelle Snyder
Soprano
Zanesville, OH

James Stensland
Tenor
Huntington, NY

Dylan Turicek
Tenor
Long Beach, NY

Sofia Vidali
Soprano
San Diego, CA

Manning Wang
Mezzo-Soprano
Suzhou, China

Tiana White
Soprano
Jamaica, NY

Bailey Wilson
Baritone
Charleston, WV

QUEENS SUMMER VOCAL INSTITUTE PRESENTS

Aria Nights

QSVI.ORG

Focus on the Process QSVI

DR. SHERRY OVERHOLT
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

JULY 24, 25 @ 5PM
& JULY 26, 2026 @ 6PM
LEFRAK CONCERT HALL
AARON COPLAND SCHOOL OF MUSIC
QUEENS COLLEGE
FLUSHING, NY

Queens Summer Vocal Institute presents

Aria Nights

Friday, July 24, 2026 • 5PM
LeFrak Concert Hall • Aaron Copland School of Music
Queens College • Flushing, NY

Violetta Zabbi, Pianist

Yuiba Shin
"Durch zärtlichkeit"
Die entfuhrung aus dem serail by W. A. Mozart

Dylan Turicek
"Dies Bildnis"
Die Zauberflöte by W. A. Mozart

Ambrose Cusick
"Batti, Batti"
Don Giovanni by W. A. Mozart

Mason Oberlin
"Vögguljóð"
Í álögum by Sigurður Þórðarson

Henry Podoll
"Bella Siccome"
Don Pasquale by Gaetano Donizetti

Liliana Mann
"S'altro che la crime"
La Clemenza di Tito by W. A. Mozart

Chantal Sadighpour
"Must the winter come so soon"
Vanessa by Samuel Barber

Riley Musi
"Salut a la France"
La Fille du Regiment by Gaetano Donizetti

Eliza Goldsteen
"The Blue"
Grounded by Jeanine Tesori

Katherine Clifford
"Donde lieta usci"
La bohème by Giacomo Puccini

YongHoon Lee
"Ah leve toi"
Romeo et Juliette by Charles Gounod

Daniela Baker
"I Want Magic"
A Streetcar Named Desire by André Previn

Casey Schopflocher
"Dopo notte"
Ariodante by George Frideric Handel

Queens Summer Vocal Institute 2026
Dr. Sherry Overholt, Executive & Artistic Director & Voice Teacher
Jennifer Grimaldi Toohey, Artistic Coordinator & Voice Teacher

Focus on the Process QSVI

QSVI.ORG

Queens Summer Vocal Institute presents

Aria Nights

Saturday, July 25, 2026 • 5PM
LeFrak Concert Hall • Aaron Copland School of Music
Queens College • Flushing, NY

Zachary Anderson & Abhay Saha, Pianists

Narissa Nagee
"Mio caro bene"
Rodelinda by George Frideric Handel

Ravi Nguyen
"Ombra Mai fu"
Serse by George Frideric Handel

Amelia Mayo
"My White Knight"
The Music Man by Rogers and Hammerstein

Molly Nemirow
"Honey Bun"
South Pacific by Rogers and Hammerstein

Isabel Breakey
"Quando m'en vo"
La bohème by Giacomo Puccini

Patricia Kopko
"Adelaide's Aria (It's My Wedding)"
The Enchanted Pig by Jonathan Dove

James Stensland
"Music of the Night"
Phantom of the Opera by Andrew Lloyd Webber

Adam Arntson
"Il mio Tesoro"
Don Giovanni by W. A. Mozart

Lynda Irizarry
"Breathe"
In the Heights by Lin-Manuel Miranda

Bailey Wilson
Congregation Aria
Glory Denied by Tom Cipullo

Jinping Li
"Un bel dì vedremo"
Madama Butterfly by Giacomo Puccini

Queens Summer Vocal Institute 2026
Dr. Sherry Overholt, Executive & Artistic Director & Voice Teacher
Jennifer Grimaldi Toohey, Artistic Coordinator & Voice Teacher

Focus on the Process QSVI

QSVI.ORG

Queens Summer Vocal Institute presents

Aria Nights

Sunday, July 26, 2026 • 6PM
LeFrak Concert Hall • Aaron Copland School of Music
Queens College • Flushing, NY

Violetta Zabbi, Pianist

Christina Draper
"Deh per questo instante solo"
La Clemenza di Tito by W. A. Mozart

Grace Cazzaniga
"Il faut partir"
La Fille du Regiment by Gaetano Donizetti

Bethany Leung
"Da Veilchen"
by W. A. Mozart

Lily Ann Faamausili
"Se Romeo t'uccise un figlio"
I Capuleti e i Montecchi by Vincenzo Bellini

Kate Dietz
"Kommt ein schlanker Bursch gegangen"
Der Freischütz by Carl Maria von Weber

Lani Lee
"Reflets"
by Lili Boulanger

Telvin Culberson
"Tu Vivi"
Ariodante by George Frideric Handel

Ed Peña
"Mein Sehnen, Mein Wähnen"
Die Tote Stadt by Erich Wolfgang Korngold

Sofia Vidali
"Una donna a quindici anni"
Così fan tutte by W. A. Mozart

Marina Beeson
Roxana's Aria
Krol Roger by Karol Szymanowsk

Finn Duncan
"Vecchia Zimarra"
La bohème by Giacomo Puccini

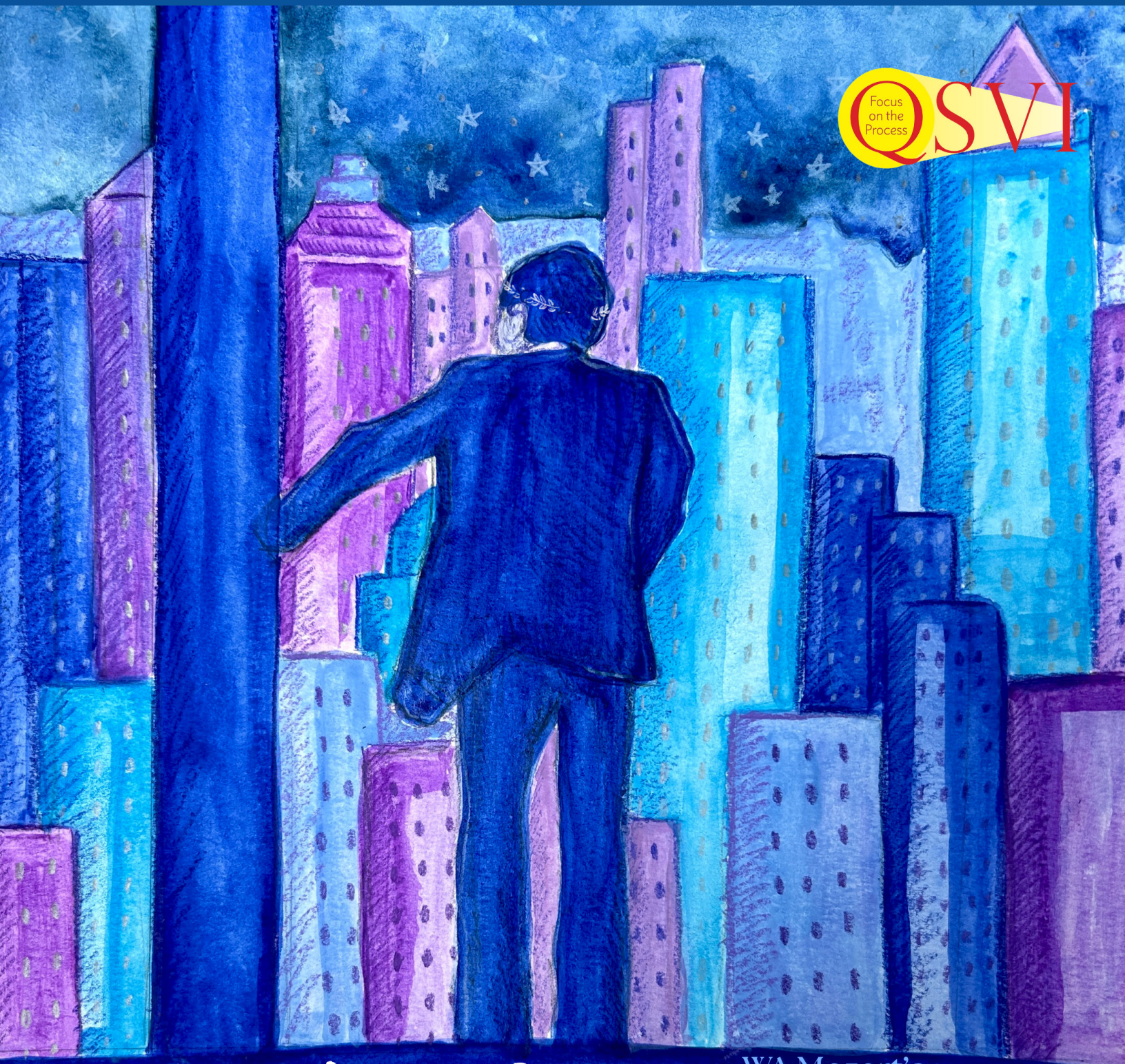
Manning Wang
"Cara Speme"
Giulio Cesare by George Frideric Handel

Henry McCue
"Při řekách Babylonských"
Biblical Songs Op 99 #7 by Antonín Dvořak

Tiana White
"Ain't it a Pretty Night"
Susannah by Carlisle Floyd

Rebecca Marchan-Espino
"Va laisse couler mes larmes"
Werther by Jules Massenet

Aylani Rodriguez
"Mein herr marquis"
Die Fledermaus by Johann Strauss II



Focus on the Process

QSVI

WA Mozart's

La Clemenza di Tito

Queens College Aaron Copland School of Music
(LeFrak Concert Hall)
Flushing, New York

August 2nd and 3rd | 7:30 pm

Directed by Alex Paul Sheerin | Music Directed by Violetta Zabbi | Conducted by Louis Burkot

Tickets Available for Purchase at the Door

Queens Summer Vocal Institute presents

La Clemenza di Tito

Sunday August 2, 2026 • 7:30PM
Monday, August 3, 2026 • 7:30PM
LeFrak Concert Hall • Aaron Copland School of Music
Queens College • Flushing, NY

Conductor	**Louis Burkot**
Stage Director	**Alex Paul Sheerin**
Assistant Stage Director	**Elaine Huang**
Music Director	**Violetta Zabbi**
Assistant Music Director	**Naseer Ashraf**
Production Assistant	**Mica Woodburn**

Cast

Sunday, August 2

Sesto	**Rebecca Marchan-Espino**
Vitellia	**Jinping Li**
Annio	**Casey Schopflocher**
Servilia	**Liliana Mann**
Tito	**Dylan Turicek**
Publio	**Henry Podoll**

Cast

Monday, August 3

Sesto	**Christina Draper**
Vitellia	**Marina Beeson**
Annio	**Elizabeth Campbell**
Servilia	**Sofia Vidali**
Tito	**Yonghoon Lee**
Publio	**Henry McCue**

Synopsis

Act I

Rome, A.D. 79. Vitellia, daughter of the deposed Emperor Vitellio, wants the current ruler, Tito (Titus Flavius Savinus Vespasianus), assassinated because he does not return her love and has chosen as consort Berenice, daughter of the King of Judea. She tries to overcome the scruples of her admirer Sesto about committing murder for her sake. Sesto's friend Annio comes to fetch him for an audience with the emperor, revealing that Berenice will not be consort after all. Vitellia's ambitions for the throne revive, and she asks Sesto to delay his plan.

Annio reminds Sesto of his own desire to marry Sesto's sister, Servilia, and urges him to ask Tito for permission. The two men reaffirm their friendship. Before the Capitol, the populace hails Tito, who declares he will help the survivors of the recent eruption of Vesuvius at Pompeii. Annio and Sesto learn that the emperor wishes to marry Servilia. Diplomatically, Annio assures Tito he welcomes the union. The emperor says the chief joy of power lies in the opportunity to help others. Annio tells Servilia the emperor wishes to marry her. She reaffirms her love for Annio, and he admits he returns it.

In the imperial palace, Publio, a guard, shows Tito a list of those who have spoken disloyally. Tito is inclined to forgive them. The discussion is interrupted by Servilia, who confesses her prior commitment to Annio. Tito generously relinquishes all claim to her and leaves, followed by Servilia. Vitellia, angry again, tells Sesto now is the time to strike. He declares that her wish

is his command. When Vitellia learns Tito is looking for her, she calls after Sesto to stop him, but it is too late.

In front of the Capitol, Sesto, who has set fire to the building, trembles with remorse. Annio, Servilia, Publio, and Vitellia appear, voicing anxiety and confusion. Believing he has succeeded in killing the emperor, Sesto starts to confess but is silenced by Vitellia.

Act II

In the palace, Annio tells Sesto the emperor has escaped harm. When Sesto confesses his assassination attempt, Annio advises that telling Tito the truth will earn forgiveness. Vitellia rushes in, imploring Sesto to flee for both their sakes, before Publio enters and demands Sesto's sword; the man Sesto struck in the flaming Capitol was a fellow conspirator, Lentulo, who survived. Sesto is led off to a senate hearing.

In a public hall, the people are relieved to find Tito safe. When the emperor doubts his friend Sesto's disloyalty, Publio cautions against being too innocent in the face of betrayal. Sesto has confessed and been sentenced, with other conspirators, to be thrown to the lions. Annio agrees Sesto must be punished but asks Tito to consider the case compassionately. The emperor hesitates to sign the death decree until he has questioned Sesto, who is brought in. Alone with Tito, Sesto says he did not want the throne for himself, but he hesitates to implicate Vitellia. Tito, not satisfied with Sesto's explanation, orders him led to execution. Alone, Tito agonizes over his decision, then tells Publio that Sesto's fate will be made known at the arena. Addressing the gods, Tito says that if they want a stern ruler, they ought to take away his human heart. He leaves, and the distraught Vitellia enters, convinced Sesto has implicated her in the conspiracy, but Servilia and Annio beg her to save Sesto by becoming Tito's empress. Vitellia takes Tito's announcement of her as his choice as proof that Sesto did not betray her secret, and she realizes she must die rather than accept the throne at the price of Sesto's life.

At the arena, Tito is meeting with Sesto for the last time when Vitellia interrupts, declaring her guilt. The betrayed ruler almost hardens his heart before deciding to pardon the conspirators, valuing their repentance more than their fidelity.

Director's Note

When programming repertoire for QSVI, we always try to think of what will help our young singers learn, thrive, and grow the most. *La Clemenza di Tito* is a virtuosic and musically rich piece that showcases the beauty and complexity of Mozart's music. In conversation with our conductor, Louis Burkot, he mentioned that the score almost hints at styles of opera that came after it, such as bel canto.

Dramatically, what immediately came to mind was House of Cards and similar modern-day political thrillers. At its core, this is a piece about politics, romance, and how the two intersect. I have chosen to set this production in modern-day Rome while retaining elements of the past. The action is semi-staged in order to best highlight the musical brilliance of both the cast and the orchestra.

In addition, we have chosen to substitute the initial overture with the second movement of Mozart's famous 23rd Piano Concerto. We feel that this not only helps heighten the dramatic stakes of the piece, but also introduces our wonderful music director and pianist, Violetta Zabbi, who is a crucial part of our orchestra for this production.

Focus on the Process

QSVI

Operatic Scenes Concert followed by

Pauline Viardot's

Cendrillon

Queens College Aaron Copland School of Music (Room 270)

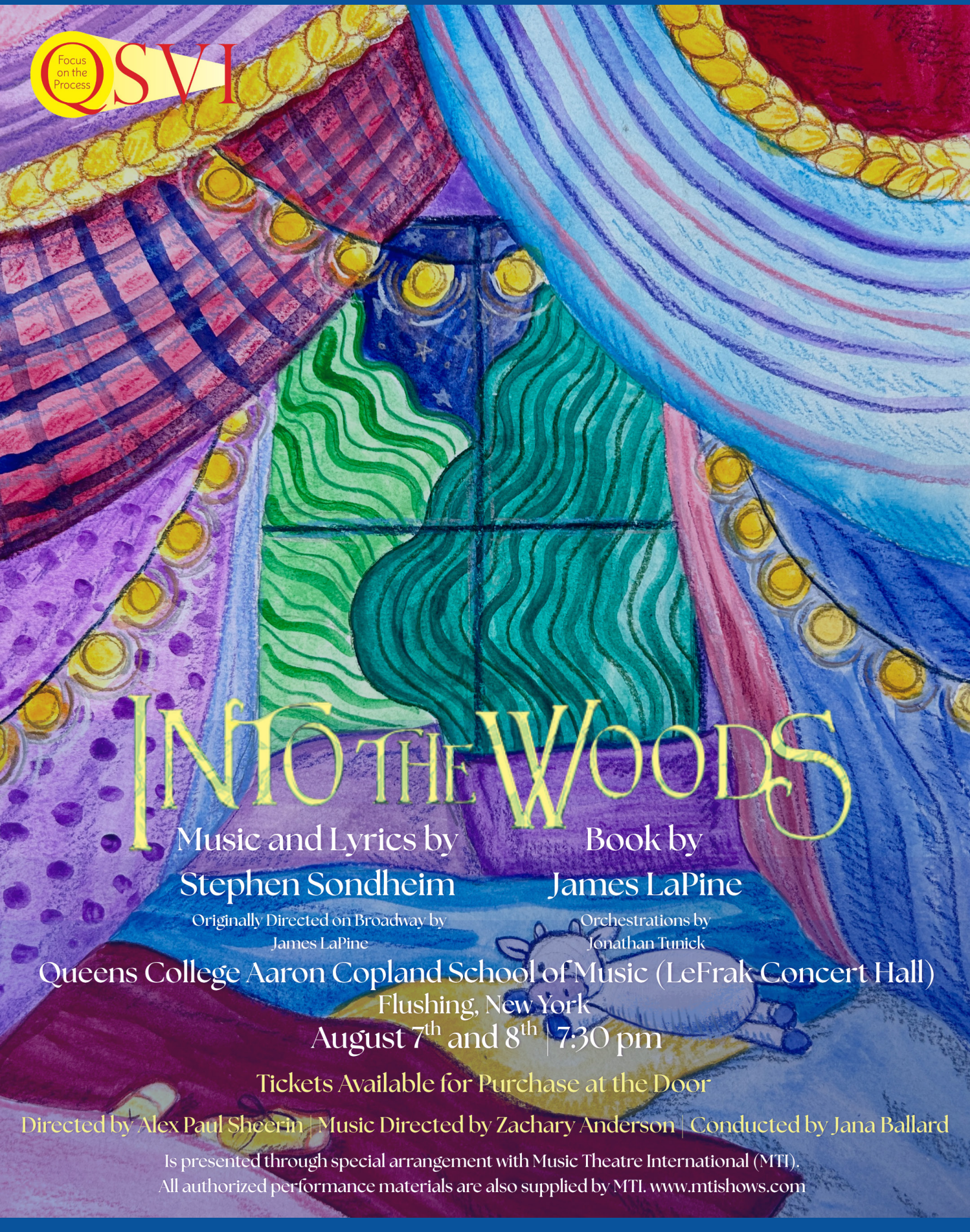
Flushing, New York

August 5th and 6th

Scenes at 7 pm, Show at 7:30 pm

Directed by Diane Machin | Music Directed by Kelly Horsted

Tickets Available for Purchase at the Door


Focus on the Process
QSVI
INTO THE WOODS
Music and Lyrics by
Stephen Sondheim
Originally Directed on Broadway by
James LaPine
Book by
James LaPine
Orchestrations by
Jonathan Tunick
Queens College Aaron Copland School of Music (LeFrak Concert Hall)
Flushing, New York
August 7th and 8th | 7:30 pm
Tickets Available for Purchase at the Door
Directed by Alex Paul Sheerin | Music Directed by Zachary Anderson | Conducted by Jana Ballard
Is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).
All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.mtishows.com

Queens Summer Vocal Institute presents

Into the Woods

Friday August 7, 2026 • 7:30PM
Saturday, August 8, 2026 • 7:30PM
LeFrak Concert Hall • Aaron Copland School of Music
Queens College • Flushing, NY

Conductor	**Jana Ballard**
Stage Director	**Alex Paul Sheerin**
Assistant Stage Director	**Abril Valbuena**
Music Director	**Zachary Anderson**
Assistant Music Director	**Abhay Saha**
Production Assistants	**Samantha Douma**
	Mica Woodburn
	Amanda Madeiros
	Lily Negroponte

Cast

Friday, August 7

Witch	**Eliza Goldsteen**
Baker's Wife	**Patricia Kopko**
Cinderella	**Isabel Breakey**
Little Red	**Amelia Mayo**
Rapunzel	**Grace Cazzaniga**
Stepmother	**Michelle Menezes**
Jack's Mother	**Lani Lee**
Florinda	**Chantal Sadighpour**
Lucinda	**Gabrielle Brockett**
Granny/Cinderella's Mother	**Sophie Hill**
Narrator/Mysterious Man	**Tiana White**
Baker	**Ed Pena**
Jack	**Telvin Culberson**
Cinderella's Prince/Wolf	**Henry Podoll**
Rapunzel's Prince	**James Stensland**
Steward	**Bodhan Budash**
Child	**William Kim**

Cast

Saturday, August 8

Witch	**Emma Dial**
Baker's Wife	**Lynda Irizarry**
Cinderella	**Narissa Nagee**
Little Red	**Marian Hernandez**
Rapunzel	**Riley Musi**
Stepmother	**Lily Negroponte**
Jack's Mother	**Molly Nemirow**
Florinda	**Bethany Leung**
Lucinda	**Gabrielle Brockett**
Granny/Cinderella's Mother	**Marissa Vollweiller**
Narrator/Mysterious Man	**Ambrose Cusick**
Baker	**Bailey Wilson**
Jack	**Adam Arntson**
Cinderella's Prince/Wolf	**Henry Podoll**
Rapunzel's Prince	**Finn Duncan**
Steward	**Bodhan Budash**
Child	**William Kim**

Synopsis

Act One

In a large forest, three households grapple with their greatest desires: Cinderella wishes to attend the King's Festival; Jack wishes his cow, Milky-White, would give milk; and a childless Baker and his Wife yearn for a family, believing the Baker's parents died in a baking accident. Meanwhile, a Witch reveals she cursed the Baker to ensure his childlessness as punishment for his father stealing her greens and magic beans. To break the spell, the Witch demands four items: a cow as white as milk, a cape as red as blood, hair as yellow as corn, and a slipper as pure as gold.

The Baker journeys into the woods, where a rapid chain of events unfolds. Cinderella receives a gown and slippers from her mother's grave. Jack trades Milky-White to the Baker's Wife for five magic beans, and Jack's mother furiously discards the beans into the dirt. The Baker rescues Little Red Ridinghood from a Wolf and secures her red cloak. Cinderella flees the Prince, leaving behind a gold slipper that the Baker's Wife eventually acquires. Jack scales a newly grown beanstalk, steals a sack of gold from a giant, and later returns with a golden hen.

Amidst the chaos, the Baker's Wife rips a lock of hair from Rapunzel—who has been imprisoned in a tower by the Witch—to satisfy the final requirement. After several trials, the group delivers the four items to the Witch. She feeds them to a restored Milky-White, drinks the milk, and is transformed into a beautiful woman, while the Baker's hidden father dies. The princes find their respective matches: Cinderella marries her prince, and Rapunzel is reunited with her blind prince, whose sight is restored by her tears. As everyone celebrates their happily-ever-afters, a giant beanstalk suddenly erupts from the ground, unnoticed by the crowd.

Act Two

Minor disturbances disrupt the characters' newfound peace until a massive earthquake caused by an invading female giant destroys their homes. The Giant demands vengeance for her husband's death and demands Jack be handed over. Panic ensues, leading to the accidental deaths of Jack's mother, the Narrator, and Rapunzel.

While lost in the woods, the Baker's Wife has a brief romantic encounter with Cinderella's Prince. Shortly after parting ways, she is crushed to death by the Giant. Stricken with grief and mutual blame, the survivors realize they must unite to stop the threat. The Witch, having lost her magic in the transformation, laments the tragedies before disappearing.

Encouraged by a vision of his father, the Baker decides to stay and fight rather than flee. Cinderella rejects her unfaithful prince, and the remaining survivors—the Baker, Jack, Little Red Ridinghood, and Cinderella—successfully trap and kill the Giant.

The group forms a new, blended family, raising the Baker's child, Jack, and Little Red Ridinghood together. As the ghosts of the fallen look on, the Witch delivers a final warning to the living: to be mindful of their actions, because "children will listen."

Director's Note

When I was four years old, I was a weird kid who loved music, fairy tales, and all things theater. Luckily for me, my father encouraged all of this, being an avid theater fan himself. One cold winter night in our basement, my dad was flipping through channels and saw that PBS was airing one of its Great Performances specials. Little did he know that this broadcast carried a magic of its own. I know for a fact that if my dad had never shown me that production of Into the Woods, I wouldn't be the person I am today. After seeing it, I was hooked on Stephen Sondheim, Bernadette Peters, and specifically this quirky musical about what really happens after "happily ever after." From there, I would use random household furniture and objects to act out scenes from the show, and this imaginative play ultimately inspired my concept for our current production.

In this version, we see a child being forced to move away from home and comfort to learn what a new "happily ever after" may entail. Into the Woods challenges us as an audience to think about what we want more than anything else in the world. For me, it was always to be a professional in the arts and take over the world. It then begs the question: what happens when you get what you wish? Is it that simple? We, of course, all know the answer. What makes the show so compelling is the profound humanity within these fantastical characters—everyone can see a reflection of themselves on stage. In conversation with Sherry Overholt, she shared that she finds herself in the Baker: someone who has to make difficult decisions, only to learn that things aren't always as rigid as they seem. For me, however, I've always identified with the Witch. For so long, trying to fit into what society tells you to be can make you feel the need to reject it entirely. She wants so desperately to understand how to fit in, and that desire drives her to make terrible decisions. Ultimately, she is the one who delivers the show's most important message: "Children will listen."

It is this message that makes Into the Woods so timeless. Despite our wishes and the consequences of receiving them, material things are not what ultimately matter. A house is not a home; it's the people, the relationships, and the heart that truly define who we are. That, to me, is the true meaning of Into the Woods. This piece means more to me than almost any other theatrical work, and getting to present it in my home theater—alongside a cast of incredible young singing actors, a brilliant music team, my dear assistant director, and a dynamically creative crew—means more than words can describe.

Above all, I dedicate this production to my father. Without him, I certainly couldn't have found my happily ever after.

Queens Summer Vocal Institute

Gala Concert

QSVI.ORG

Focus on the Process

QSVI

DR. SHERRY OVERHOLT
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

SUNDAY AUGUST 9, 2026 @ 1PM
LEFRAK CONCERT HALL
AARON COPLAND SCHOOL OF MUSIC
QUEENS COLLEGE
FLUSHING, NY
TICKETS $20 AT THE DOOR

QSVI.ORG

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

FACEBOOK.COM/QSVI

INSTAGRAM @QSVI_NYC

Focus on the Process

QSVI

Summer 2026